

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. Claims 1-25 are rejected. No amendments have been made.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-3, 5, 9, 13, 15-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choquier, et al., U.S. Patent 5,951,694, in view of Kurashima et al., U.S. Patent 6,694,350. Each of independent claims 1, 13, 20, and 23 is included in this rejection.

A Declaration of Prior Invention in the United States pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 is filed concurrently herewith to swear behind the cited reference Kurashima et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,694,350. Accordingly, U.S. Patent No. 6,694,350 is properly excluded as prior art against claims 1-25 of the Application under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-12, independent claim 13 and its dependent claims 14-19, independent claim 20 and its dependent claims 21-22, and independent claim 23 and its dependent claims 24-25 are thereby allowable for at least this reason.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choquier in view of Kurashima. As a dependent claim depending from claim 1, claim 4 is allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claims 6 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choquier in view of Kurashima, and further in view of Fujimoto, JP02001117932A. As dependent claims depending from claims 1 and 13, respectively, claims 6 and 14 are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

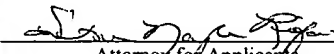
Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choquier in view of Kurashima and Al-Ghosein, et al., U.S. Patent 6,473,791. As dependent claims depending from claim 1, claims 7 and 8 are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claims 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Choquier in view of Bartle et al., U. S. Patent No. 6,188,888. As dependent claims depending from claim 1, claims 10-12 are allowable for at least the foregoing reasons.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5086.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on July 21, 2004.


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7/21/04
Date of Signature

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